



AOT in Action

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from Director Sherry Henry:

Good afternoon,

With the Wallow Fire now nearly 80 percent contained, the Monument Fire at nearly 85 percent containment, and the Horseshoe II fire 100 percent contained the regions affected by all of these wildfires are trying to get back to business.

Many Arizona rural communities are dependent upon tourism activity to maintain a healthy economic condition for their area. Help us remind residents and visitors alike about the wonderful travel destinations that can be experienced in both northeastern and southern Arizona and get these communities back on track. Although fire damage has occurred, there are still many activities that can be enjoyed in these areas. Be sure to call ahead to make certain these tourist destinations can accommodate you.

Also, with the Monsoon season approaching, please remind travelers of the flash flood dangers that can occur throughout our state as well.

In agency related news, Kaus Media Services has been awarded the Public Relations contract for AOT's Germany market. We're thrilled that Kaus Media Services has been selected. Our agency has a long history with Kaus Media and we look forward to continuing our PR efforts with them.

Have a great week!

Sherry Henry
Director, Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News

Register for Governor's Conference on Tourism!

Register now for the 2011 [Governor's Conference on Tourism](#)! This event is the premier educational and networking gathering for the travel and tourism industry. It is filled with practical ideas from the industry's top experts that you can take back to your community and immediately apply to your program of work. You'll get the latest hospitality and tourism information, network with more than 500 of your colleagues, learn about products and services from exhibiting sponsors, and get the latest industry research available.

This year's theme will celebrate Arizona's Centennial allowing us to celebrate our state's development along with our own industry's growth. To register, visit www.aztourismconference.com.

New Update to AOT's Research Web site!

The following items have been updated in the Research and Statistics section of AOT's business-to-business Web site www.azot.gov.

- Airport Passenger Visitation February 2011
- Gross Sales & Tourism Taxes April 2011
- State Parks Visitation April 2011
- National Parks Visitation March 2011 (preliminary)
- National, Regional, Arizona Lodging May 2011
- County Lodging May 2011

For additional information or questions, please contact Melissa Elkins, Research Manager, at 602-364-3716 or via e-mail at melkins@azot.gov.

AOT's Trade and Media Relations 2012 Marketing Plan Now Available on AZOT.gov

The Arizona Office of Tourism has released its 2012 Trade and Media Relations Marketing Plan*. The plan is accessible on the agency's business-to-business site, <http://azot.gov/industry-events-and-calendar/trade-and-media-events> and displays all the Trade Shows; Sales and Media Missions; Familiarization (FAM) Tours and Press Trips; and Co-operative Marketing Projects that the agency will participate in during the next fiscal year. For more information contact Mary Rittmann at 602-364-3730 or via email at mrtrittmann@azot.gov.

** Continual updates to the Calendar will occur as FY12 plans are confirmed. AOT reserves the right to cancel or change dates, details and participation cost of trade shows, sales missions; media missions FAM tours, press trips and co-operative projects as needed.*

Meet Canadian Media Representatives at the Inaugural Vancouver Media Marketplace

AOT is pleased to invite Arizona DMOs, CVBs, and Chambers to participate in our inaugural Vancouver Media Marketplace. The event will take place at the Hawksworth Restaurant, Tuesday, August 16th. We anticipate approximately 15 to 20 key media representatives from this market to attend. Delegates will have a small table for displaying materials, distributing press kits, and meeting with media. Registration cost is \$600 per delegate, with participation

limited to one delegate per organization. Cost is not inclusive of travel expenses, shipping costs or similar. For more information contact Kara Woroniec at 602-364-3715 or via email at kworoniec@azot.gov.

Pow Wow Leaves Our Hearts in San Francisco!

US Travel Association's International Pow Wow is the travel industry's premier international marketplace and is the largest generator of travel to the USA. In just three days of intensive pre-scheduled appointments, more than 1,000 U. S. travel organizations and approximately 1,500 International and Domestic Buyers from more than 70 countries conduct business negotiations that result in the generation of more than \$3.5 billion in future USA travel. The event in the City by the Bay marked the shows 43rd anniversary.

This year AOT's Director Trade & Media Relations, Mary Rittmann and Travel Industry Marketing Manager, Jennifer Sutcliffe attended the US Travel Associations International Pow Wow from May 21– 25 in San Francisco, California. The staff was joined by AOT's international representatives from Mexico and the United Kingdom for a week of meetings, appointments, and networking.

AOT held more than 80 prescheduled appointments with buyers from around the world who stopped by the Arizona booth to receive the latest product updates, discuss cooperative marketing opportunities and plan for the upcoming year.

In addition, AOT participated in the Media Marketplace, where travel writers and journalists convened to receive the latest information on destinations around the U.S. For more information or if you would like a copy of the show report, please contact Jennifer Sutcliffe at 602-364-3693 or jsutcliffe@azot.gov.

Arizona Calling – Share Something Amazing!

AOT, in collaboration with the Governor's Task Force on Tourism and Economic Vitality, has launched "[Arizona Calling – Share Something Amazing](#)," an ePostcard campaign featuring iconic Arizona images. The ePostcard campaign features vibrant imagery of the Grand Canyon State that gives residents and travelers the opportunity to share Arizona's beauty with others. With customizable messages, email ePostcards can be sent to friends and family around the globe at no cost. Built to be an on-going campaign, the images of the ePostcard will change periodically to reflect Arizona's seasons and activities. The ePostcard is available through Arizonaguide.com.

Get your Summer Travel Packages and Deals on Value AZ.com

The new landing page is up for [Value AZ.com](http://ValueAZ.com), but we still need your travel packages and deals! The ads showcase the amazing summer travel opportunities found throughout Arizona in addition to promoting the economic benefits of the travel and tourism industry. **To celebrate the Arizona Centennial, coming up February 14, 2012, we're also asking that deals and packages supplied use the Centennial theme whenever possible.**

If you want your summer travel packages or deals promoted through ValueAZ.com, this is your chance! Upload your travel deals and packages to the Travel Deals section of AOT's consumer Web site, <http://www.arizonaguide.com/arizona-tourism-partners>. You must first sign up to be a Travel Partner on www.Arizonaguide.com before you can list a travel package or deal. There

is no charge to list a package on the Travel Deals section. If you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact Sandy Pederson at 602-364-3698 or via email at spederson@azot.gov.

Upcoming Events & Activities

[GCOT](#)

Dates: July 13-15

Location: Doubletree Paradise Valley Resort

[Visit USA Media Marketplace - UK](#)

Date: July 6, 2011

Location: London, United Kingdom

[Vancouver Media Marketplace](#)

Dates: August 16

Location: Hawksworth Restaurant, Vancouver

Industry News

STR: ADR stays strong in May

The U.S. hotel industry in May experienced an average daily rate of more than US\$100 for the third consecutive month, according to data from STR.

This was the first time ADR was above US\$100 for three consecutive months since the beginning of 2009.

Overall, U.S. hotel industry occupancy in May was up 4.6% to 61.5%, ADR ended the month with a 4.0% increase to US\$101.54, and revenue per available room rose 8.8% to US\$62.47.

“The U.S. hotel industry continues to get closer to peak ADR levels reached in 2008,” said Amanda Hite, president at STR. “May’s gains and the steady ADR gains for the year are positive signs that hoteliers are starting to feel comfortable leveraging rates. With consistent demand for hotel rooms it is clear that the industry is on the right path, and we are looking for even more improvement in ADR for the remainder of 2011.”

Among the chain-scale segments, the upper-midscale segment posted the largest occupancy increase, rising 6.1% to 63.7%, followed by the luxury segment with a 5.0% increase to 71.5%.

Two chain-scale segments reported ADR increases of more than 5%: the luxury segment (+6.4% to US\$254.61) and the upper-upscale segment (+5.1% to US\$151.19). The midscale segment ended the month virtually flat with a 0.8% decrease to US\$72.95.

Luxury segment RevPAR rose 11.8% to US\$182.06, reporting the largest increase in that metric, followed by the upper-midscale segment with a 9.6% increase to US\$60.30.

Among the top 25 markets, Detroit, Michigan, experienced the largest occupancy increase, rising 13.7% to 61.4%, followed by Tampa-St. Petersburg, Florida, with a 13.0% increase to 58.6%. Nashville, Tennessee (-5.8% to 63.7%), and New York, New York (-1.9% to 85.9%), reported the only occupancy decreases.

Four markets achieved double-digit ADR increases: San Francisco/San Mateo, California (+16.5% to US\$157.06); Nashville (+11.9% to US\$92.88); Oahu Island, Hawaii (+11.5% to US\$158.85); and Chicago, Illinois (+10.5% to US\$125.96).

None of the top markets reported ADR or RevPAR decreases for the month. San Francisco/San Mateo jumped 25.0% in RevPAR to US\$129.77, reporting the largest increase in that metric. (*HotelNewsNow.com, June 21*)

TSA to Launch Trial Run of Trusted Traveler Program

The U.S. plans on launching a trial run of the trusted traveler program later this year, John Pistole, head of the Transportation Security Administration, told the U.S. Senate's Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee.

The TSA has been under pressure to provide a security screening program for business travelers and frequent flyers that would allow them to undergo security background screenings so they could move quickly through airport checkpoints.

Pistole said the TSA would work first with U.S. carriers and expects to start a trial process this fall. Pistole also said that the TSA was reviewing screening procedures for children after a video of a 6-year-old being patted down went viral, with many questioning whether young children truly present a security risk.

The U.S. Travel Association, which has been lobbying for a trusted traveler program, praised the initiative. This is a risk-based trusted traveler program where travelers can opt in and voluntarily provide background information to qualify for expedited screening, similar to trusted traveler programs operated by U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

"We are extremely pleased to hear Administrator Pistole plans to implement a trial trusted traveler program as early as this fall," said Roger Dow, president and CEO of the U.S. Travel Association. "U.S. travelers will greatly appreciate TSA's responsiveness on this issue." For more information, visit www.tsa.gov. (*Travel Pulse, June 22*)

U.S. Travel Association Praises New Senate Travel & Tourism Caucus

The U.S. Travel Association applauded the launch of the U.S. Senate Travel & Tourism Caucus, a bipartisan caucus that will work to promote policies favorable to travel and tourism. The new caucus was announced by U.S. Sens. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), Mark Begich

(D-Alaska) and Mark Kirk (R-Ill.). The goal is to reduce barriers to travel and raise awareness of the importance of the job-creating travel and tourism industry.

"We know our country can create more jobs if it can get more people traveling, which is why it is vitally important to have a caucus focused on travel policies," said Roger Dow, president and CEO of the U.S. Travel Association. "We welcome this caucus and are thankful to Senators Begich, Blunt, Kirk and Klobuchar for creating it, and we look forward to working with them to advance important travel issues like improving the U.S. visa system and making aviation security more efficient."

The U.S. travel industry generated \$1.8 trillion in economic output and directly generated \$118 billion in tax revenue for local, state and federal governments in 2010. The industry supports 14 million jobs and is among the top 10 industries in 48 states and Washington, D.C. in terms of employment. "Whether it is support from President Obama on the Secure Travel and Counterterrorism Partnership Program Act of 2011 or the Transportation Security Administration's decision to implement a trusted traveler program, we're seeing increased support for policies that promote travel and the 14 million Americans it employs," said Dow. "We look forward to seeing many other senators join the Travel & Tourism Caucus in the 112th Congress." For more information, visit www.ustravel.org. (*Travel Industry Wire, June 23*)

High gas prices will cut July 4 travel, AAA says

High gas prices, coupled with higher fares and hotel rates, will keep many travelers tethered to their backyards this Fourth of July weekend, according to an AAA survey out today.

AAA estimates 39 million Americans will travel 50 miles or more from home over the long weekend, down from 40 million last year. Of those, some 32.8 million, or 84 percent, will drive to their vacations — a million fewer than last year.

AAA said a \$1 increase in gasoline prices from last year, expected to average \$3.74 a gallon during the holiday weekend, would be the main factor keeping U.S. motorists off the road. U.S. gas prices peaked on May 5 at \$3.98 a gallon, according to daily price data from AAA.

Just over 3 million people, or 8% of holiday travelers, will fly over the weekend, a 9% rise from a year ago, AAA reports. That's despite an 11% rise in the average price of the lowest round-trip ticket for the top 40 U.S. air routes.

Those who do hit the road next weekend can still find deals: According to Orbitz' Insider Index, Las Vegas offers some of the best bargains with hotel rates down an average of 24% this year and fares down 9%. Hotel rooms in Vegas, Orlando, and Washington, D.C. all average under \$100 a night, says Orbitz.

Hotwire, meanwhile, says overall hotel rates are up 5% for Uncle Sam's birthday, to \$87 per night. But rates at several popular cities have dropped or stayed flat, the company adds - including New York City, where the average rate is \$150, down 10% from a year ago.

Hotwire's advice for travelers trying to find a cheap last-minute flight: June 30 and July 6 are the least expensive days to fly, while July 2 and July 5 are the priciest. (*USA Today, June 23*)

Summer Travel Bounces Back As Americans Plan to Spend \$86.4 Billion in 2011

Despite concern over high gas prices, improving economic conditions and a pent up demand for travel are moving Americans to spend nearly \$16 billion more on summer travel in 2011 than they did in 2010. This is according to a survey released today by global travel assistance company Mondial Assistance USA and its Access America brand of travel insurance. Nearly one half (45%) of Americans say they're confident (30% very/15% somewhat) that they'll take a summer vacation this year, up 5 points from last year, and up 10 points in the last two years. In all, Americans plan to spend \$86.4 billion on summer vacations in 2011.

Not only are more Americans intending to travel on vacation this summer, but those that are anticipate spending more this year. The average family intends to spend \$1,704 this year; up from the \$1,567 those who were confident they'd travel last year anticipated spending. This represents an increase of 9% over last year.

With more Americans confident they'll travel this summer, and with those who intend to travel expecting to spend more than last year, the overall projected spend on vacations this summer is up 22% this year over last year, rising to \$86.4 billion. (*Travel Industry Wire, June 23*)

Calendar of Events

Visit www.ArizonaGuide.com to find information on all the exciting [events, festivals and activities](#) held throughout the Grand Canyon State!

Connect with the Arizona Office of Tourism!

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